

Senate Bill No. 1236

CHAPTER 198

An act to amend Sections 375, 25258, and 25950 of, and to add Section 24255 to, the Vehicle Code, relating to vehicles.

[Approved by Governor July 27, 2004. Filed with
Secretary of State July 27, 2004.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 1236, Murray. Lighting equipment.

(1) Existing law defines lighting equipment for purposes of the Vehicle Code.

This bill would include within the definition of lighting equipment, an illuminating device that emits radiation predominantly in the infrared region of the electromagnetic spectrum, whether or not these emissions are visible to the unaided eye.

This bill would allow a vehicle to be equipped with a system to supplement the driver's visibility of the roadway to the front or rear of the vehicle during darkness, as specified.

The bill would prohibit any part of the illuminating device from being physically or optically combined with any other required or authorized lighting device. The bill would authorize the illuminating device to be installed within a housing containing other required or permitted lighting devices, if the function of the other devices is not impaired thereby.

(2) Existing law specifies the color of lamps and reflectors on vehicles. Existing law requires that the emitted light from lamps and the reflected light from reflectors, visible from in front of a vehicle, shall be white or yellow, with certain exceptions.

This bill would make an additional exception by requiring that an illuminating device described in paragraph (1) emit radiation predominantly in the infrared region of the electromagnetic spectrum, as specified.

(3) Existing law allows an authorized emergency vehicle to display a flashing white light from a gaseous discharge lamp designed and used for the purpose of controlling official traffic control signals.

This bill would prohibit, except for those emergency vehicles, a vehicle from being equipped with a device that emits any illumination or radiation that is designed or used for the purpose of controlling official traffic control signals.

(4) Under existing law, it is a crime to violate the Vehicle Code. By creating new requirements with respect to lighting equipment for vehicles, this bill would create a new crime and thereby would impose a state-mandated local program.

(5) The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local agencies and school districts for certain costs mandated by the state. Statutory provisions establish procedures for making that reimbursement.

This bill would provide that no reimbursement is required by this act for a specified reason.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. Section 375 of the Vehicle Code is amended to read:

375. "Lighting equipment" is any of the following lamps or devices:

(a) A headlamp, auxiliary driving, passing, or fog lamp, fog taillamp, taillamp, stoplamp, supplemental stoplamp, license plate lamp, clearance lamp, side marker lamp, signal lamp or device, supplemental signal lamp, deceleration signal device, cornering lamp, running lamp, red, blue, amber, or white warning lamp, flashing red schoolbus lamp, side-mounted turn signal lamp, and schoolbus side lamp.

(b) An operating unit or canceling mechanism for turn signal lamps or for the simultaneous flashing of turn signal lamps as vehicular hazard signals, and an advance stoplamp switch.

(c) A flasher mechanism for turn signals, red schoolbus lamps, warning lamps, the simultaneous flashing of turn signal lamps as vehicular hazard signals, and the headlamp flashing systems for emergency vehicles.

(d) Any equipment regulating the light emitted from a lamp or device or the light sources therein.

(e) A reflector, including reflectors for use on bicycles, and reflectors used for required warning devices.

(f) An illuminating device that emits radiation predominantly in the infrared or ultraviolet regions of the spectrum, whether or not these emissions are visible to the unaided eye.

SEC. 2. Section 24255 is added to the Vehicle Code, to read:

24255. (a) A vehicle may be equipped with a system to supplement the driver's visibility of the roadway to the front or rear of the vehicle during darkness. This system may incorporate an illuminating device that emits radiation predominantly in the infrared region of the electromagnetic spectrum and a display monitor to provide an image visible to the driver of the vehicle. The system, or any portion of it, shall



not obstruct the vision of the driver, and shall not emit any glaring light visible in any direction or to any person. The illuminating device may be mounted inside the vehicle, if it is constructed and mounted so as to prevent any direct or reflected light, other than a monitorial indicator emitted from the device, from being visible to the driver.

(b) The system shall be operated only with the headlamps lighted. An illuminating device for the system shall be interlocked with the headlamp switch so that it is operable only when the headlamps are lighted.

(c) (1) No part of the illuminating device may be physically or optically combined with any other required or permitted lighting device.

(2) The illuminating device may be installed within a housing containing other required or permitted lighting devices, if the function of the other devices is not impaired thereby.

SEC. 3. Section 25258 of the Vehicle Code is amended to read:

25258. (a) An authorized emergency vehicle operating under the conditions specified in Section 21055 may display a flashing white light from a gaseous discharge lamp designed and used for the purpose of controlling official traffic control signals.

(b) An authorized emergency vehicle used by a peace officer, as defined in Section 830.1 of, subdivision (a), (b), (c), (d), (e), (f), (g), or (i) of Section 830.2 of, subdivision (b) of Section 830.31 of, subdivision (a) or (b) of Section 830.32 of, Section 830.33 of, subdivision (a) of Section 830.36 of, subdivision (a) of Section 830.4 of, or Section 830.6 of, the Penal Code, in the performance of the peace officer's duties, may, in addition, display a steady or flashing blue warning light visible from the front, sides, or rear of the vehicle.

(c) Except as provided in subdivision (a), a vehicle shall not be equipped with a device that emits any illumination or radiation that is designed or used for the purpose of controlling official traffic control signals.

SEC. 4. Section 25950 of the Vehicle Code is amended to read:

25950. This section applies to the color of lamps and to any reflector exhibiting or reflecting perceptible light of 0.05 candela or more per foot-candle of incident illumination. Unless provided otherwise, the color of lamps and reflectors upon a vehicle shall be as follows:

(a) The emitted light from all lamps and the reflected light from all reflectors, visible from in front of a vehicle, shall be white or yellow, except as follows:

(1) Rear side marker lamps required by Section 25100 may show red to the front.

(2) The color of foglamps described in Section 24403 may be in the color spectrum from white to yellow.



(3) An illuminating device, as permitted under Section 24255, shall emit radiation predominantly in the infrared region of the electromagnetic spectrum. Any incidental visible light projecting to the front of the vehicle shall be predominantly yellow to white. Any incidental visible light projecting to the rear of the vehicle shall be predominantly red. Any incidental visible light from an illuminating device, as permitted under Section 24255, shall not resemble any other required or permitted lighting device or official traffic control device.

(b) The emitted light from all lamps and the reflected light from all reflectors, visible from the rear of a vehicle, shall be red except as follows:

(1) Stoplamps on vehicles manufactured before January 1, 1979, may show yellow to the rear.

(2) Turn signal lamps may show yellow to the rear.

(3) Front side marker lamps required by Section 25100 may show yellow to the rear.

(4) Backup lamps shall show white to the rear.

(5) The rearward facing portion of a front-mounted double-faced turn signal lamp may show amber to the rear while the headlamps or parking lamps are lighted, if the intensity of the light emitted is not greater than the parking lamps and the turn signal function is not impaired.

(6) A reflector meeting the requirements of, and installed in accordance with, Section 24611 shall be red or white, or both.

(c) All lamps and reflectors visible from the front, sides, or rear of a vehicle, except headlamps, may have any unlighted color, provided the emitted light from all lamps or reflected light from all reflectors complies with the required color. Except for backup lamps, the entire effective projected luminous area of lamps visible from the rear or mounted on the sides near the rear of a vehicle shall be covered by an inner lens of the required color when the unlighted color differs from the required emitted light color. Taillamps, stoplamps, and turn signal lamps that are visible to the rear may be white when unlighted on vehicles manufactured before January 1, 1974.

SEC. 5. No reimbursement is required by this act pursuant to Section 6 of Article XIII B of the California Constitution because the only costs that may be incurred by a local agency or school district will be incurred because this act creates a new crime or infraction, eliminates a crime or infraction, or changes the penalty for a crime or infraction, within the meaning of Section 17556 of the Government Code, or changes the definition of a crime within the meaning of Section 6 of Article XIII B of the California Constitution.

